Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 USUN N 02807 01 OF 02 311919Z
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 ISO-00 IOE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00
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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5107
INFO USINT HAVANA POUCH
AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 2807

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, UNGA, RQ, US, CU
SUBJECT: COMMITTEE OF 24 (C-24) CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO:
MEETING WITH CUBAN PERM REP ALARCON

REF: A) STATE 205665
B) LAGOS 9856
C) STATE 203109
D) USUN 2795

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ON AUGUST 30, AMBADDADOR LEONARD AND MISSOFF HAD A 45-MINUTE DISCUSSION OF C-24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO WITH CUBAN PERM REP ALARCON. LEONARD REPEATELY EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE QUESTION AND THE NEGATIVE IMPACT THAT ADOPTION OF THE CUBAN RESOLUTION WOULD HAVE. ALARCON SAID THAT IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR EASUM (REF B), EASUM HAD EMPHASIZED DIFFUCULTIES WITH PANAMA CANAL TREATY RATIFICA-TION IF THE RESOLUTION WERE ADOPTED RATHER THAN PLACING THE ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR BILATERAL RESOLUTIONS.

ALARCON SAID A CONSENSUS WOULD BE DIFFUCULT BECAUSE OF CONFRONTATIONAL PRESS CONVERAGE WHICH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 USUN N 02807 01 OF 02 311919Z

MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR CUBA TO MODIFY ITS POSITION IN THE FACR OF CHARGES THAT CUBA HAS ALREADY EASED UP ON PUERTO RICO IN RESPONSE TO US PRESSURE. ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH ALARCON EMPHASIZED WAS THE APPEARANCE BEFORE THE C-24 OF COMMONWEALTH AND STATEHOOD ADVOCATES. ALARCON NOTED THAT HE COULD HAVE HAD COSPONSORS FOR TH E CUBAN RESOLUTION

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

BUT THAT THE COSPONSORS INSISTED ON ASSURANCES
THAT THE RESOLUTION NOT BE WIHDRAWAN (SIC).
ALARCON SOUGHT TO ENGAGE LEONARD IN A DISCUSSION
OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE CUBAN DRAFT. LEONARD MADE
CLEAR THAT WE COULD NOT ENTER INTO SUCH A DISCUSSION
AND THAT NO RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO WOULD BE
ACCEPTABLE TO US. IN CLOSING, LEONARD REITERATED
THW WIDESPREAD IMPACT THAT ADOPTION OF THE CUBAN
RESOLUTION WOULD HAVE. ALARCON SAID HE SAW THE
POINT AND WOULD FULLY REPORT TO CONVERSATION.
ALTHOUGH ALARCON'S COMMENT'S ON THE DIFFICULTY OF
ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS ARE IN CONTRAST TO THE MULTIPLE
REPORTS OF CUBAN FLEXIBILITY, THEY ARE NOT INCON-
SISTENT WITH ALARCON'S SKILLS AS A NEGOTIATOR. END SUMMARY

2. ON AUGUST 30 PURSUANT TO INSTRUCTIONS IN REF A,
AMBASSADOR LEONARD AND MISOFF (KRIENDLER) HAS A
45-MINUTE DISCUSSION OF C-24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO
RICO WITH CUBAN PERM REP ALARCON. LEAONARD REPEATEDLY
EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THE QUESTION
OF PUERTO RICO AS WELL AS CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBLE
EFFECT ON US/CUBAN RELATIONS OF ADOPTION OF THE
CUBAN RESOLUTION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PURPOSE
OF THE MEETNG WAS TO INSURE THAT THERE WAS NO LACK
OF COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF OUR VIEWS ON A
QUESTION OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO US. HE NOTED THAT, ON
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PAGE 03 USUN N 02807 01 OF 02 311919Z

THE SAME DAY THAT THE C-24 WILL RECOMMEND CONSIDER-
ATION OF PUERTO RICO, THE INTERESTSECTIONS WILL BE
OPENED IN HAVANA AND WASHINGTON.

3. ALARCON SAID THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THE ACCIDENT OF
TIMING. IT HAS NOT BEEN THE GOC'S INTENTION TO CAUSE
DIFFICULTIES FOR THE US THROUGH THE PURSUIT OF
CUBA'S LONG-TERM AND HISTORICALLY--ROOTED INTEREST IN THE
PUERTO RICAN CAUSE. HE NOTED (AND LATER " INSISTED") THAT
IN THE PORTION OF AMBASSADOR EASUM'S CONVERSATION WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER MALCIERA (REF B) IN WHICH HE HAD
PARTICIPATED, EASUM HAD EMPHASIZED DIFFICULTIES WITH
PANAMA CANAL TREATY RWATIFICATION, IF THE CUBAN RESOLUTION
WERE ADOPTED, RATHER THAN PLACING THE ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT
OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. LEONARD AGREED THAT THE
POTENTIAL PROBLEM WITH THE TREATY RATIFICATION WAS
A VERY REAL ONE BUT SAID THE ISSUE IS MUCH BROADER.
ADOPTION OF THE CUBAN RESOLUTION WOULD INVITE A
HOSTILE REACTION FROM A WIDE SECTION OF THE US
PRESS, PUBLIC AND CONGRESS WHICH WOULD NECESSARILY
AFFECT CUBAN/US RELATIONS. IN ADDITION, IT COULD
CAUSE GENERAL PROBLEMS FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

IF, AFTER SIX MONTHS OF VIGOROUS EFFORTS IN SOUTHER AFRICA, THE MIDDLE EAST, NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONS AND LATIN AMERICAN, THE C-24 COMPOSED OF MANY OF THOSE COUNTRIES TOWARD WHICH US CONCERN HAS NOW BEEN SHOWN WERE WITH CUBAN LEADERSHIP TO KICK US IN THE STOMACH.

4. ALARCON LATERNOTED THAT VRAALSEN HAD PASSED ALONG AMBASSADOR MCHENRY'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN ABOUT THEEFFECT ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS (REF D), BUT SAID THAT HEARING IT DIRECTLY FROM US CLEARLY CARRIED ADDITIONAL WEIGHT. HE ALSO NOTED THAT HE HAD ONLY PARTICIPATED IN PART OF THE EASUM CONVER-SATION AND MIGHT HAVE MISSED SOME OF WHAT WAS SAID.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 USUN N 02807 01 OF 02 311919Z

5. ALARCON SAID THAT CUBA WAS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION BECAUSE OF PRESS COVERAGE WHICH HEIGHTENED THE ATMOSPHERE OF CONFRONTATION, ON THE ONE HAND, AND WHICH, ON THE OTHER, MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR CUBA TO MODIFY ITS POSITION IN THE FACE OF CHARGES THAT THE GOC HAS ALREADY EASED UP IN RSESPONSE TO US PRESSURE. REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT STATEHOOD AND COMMONWEALTH ADVOCATES HAD APPEARED BEFORE THE C-24, ALARCON SAID HE "DID NOT UNDERSTAND" THAT US POSITION OF C-24 CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO.
THEIR APPEARANCE CHANGED THE CHARACTER OF THE C-24 PROCEEDINGS SINCE THOSE APPEARING NO LONGER REPRE-SENTED "JUST 6 PERCENT" OF THE POPULATION. LEONARD AND MISSOFF EXPLAINED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE US POSITION, THE THE COMMONWEALTH AND STATEHOOD ADVOCATES WHO HAD APPEARED DIDSO ON THEIR OWN INITWTIVE WITHOUT ANY OFFICIAL SANCTION FROM THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC (PDP) OR NEW PROGRESSIVE (NPP) PARTIES AND THAT THE APPEARED IN EXERCISE OF THEIR RIGHTS OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH. ALARCON, DIS-

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 USUN N 02807 02 OF 02 312000Z
ACTION IO-14

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

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O R 311644Z AUG 77
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5108
INFO USINT HAVANA POUCH
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USUN 2807

PLAYING A HIGHLY DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF THE CAST OF CHARACTERS, REPEATEDLY ALLUDED TO THE OFFICIAL POSITIONS OF THE PDP MEMBERS AND THEIR CLOSE TIES TO THE COMMONWEALTH HIERARCHY. WE INFORMED HIM OF GOVERNOR HERNANDEZ-COLON'S LETTER OF AUGUST 30 (COPY DATAFAXED TO DEPARTMENT - SCHIELE-IO/UNP), SPECIFICALLY REITERATING INTER ALIA TH PDP'S REJECTION OF THE COMMITTEE'S COMPETENCE TO CONSIDER PUERTO RICO AND NOTING THE UNOFFICIAL STATUS OF THE PDP PETITIONERS. IN RESPONSE TO OUR POINTING OUT THAT THE STATEHOOD ADVOCATES HAD NO OFFICIAL STANDING THE NPP, ALARCON REPLIED THAT HE HAD JUST READ GOVERNOR ROMERO BARCELO'S COMMENTS OF THE PRECEDING DAY EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT THE C-24 WOULD ADOPT THE CUBAN DRAFT RESOLUTION.

6. ALARCON SAID THAT HE HAD REPORTED THE LAGOS EASUM-MALCIERA-ALARCON MEETING IN FULL TO HAVANA BUT HAD HAD NO RPT NO REPLY AS YET. COMMUNICATIONS FROM LAGOS ARE DIFFICULT AND PERHAPS SOMETHING WENT AWRY. FOREIGN MINISTER MALCIERA IS NOW IN LONDON AND WILL BE IN LIBYA ON SEPTEMBER 1ST, BUT AN ANSWER FROM HAVANA IS POSSIBLE IN HIS ABSENCE.
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7. ALERCON NOTED THAT HE COULD HAVE GOTTEN CO-SPONSORS FOR THE CUBAN RESOLUTION BUT THAT THEY WANTED ASSURANCES THAT THE RESOLUTION WOULD NOT BE WITHDRAWN (SIC). AS A CONSEQUENCE, HOWEVER, OF SUBMITTING THE RESOLUTION AS AN EXCLUSIVELY CUBAN DRAFT, IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO TOUGHEN UP THE LANGUAGE IN OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 3 (DEMANDING THE RELEASE OF THE NATIONALIST PRISONERS). IN WHAT APPEARKD TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO INVITE A SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF THE TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION, ALARCON REPEATEDLY COMMENTED THAT THIS PARAGRAPH IS NOT

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

IMPORTANT TO THE RESOLUTION AS IT IS TOTALLY UN-
RELATED TO THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO'S STATUS AND
THAT HE HAS ALTERNATIVE WORDING FOR IT (PREPARED
FOR THE EARLIER VERSION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION)
NOTING THE VIEWS OF THEPETITIONERS ON THE PRISONERS -
A FACTUAL STATEMENT, WE AGREED. HE SAID IT WAS HIS
INCLINATION NOT TO HAVE THE REFERENCE AT ALL

ALARCON SAID THE OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH ONE WAS
ACCEPTABLE TO EVERYONE, AND THAT WHIILE OPERATIVE
PARAGRAPH TWO MIGHT CAUSE SOME PROBLEMS FOR US,
CHANGES WERE POSSIBLE. CONCERNING OPERATIVE
PARAGRAPH FOUR, ALARCON NOTED THAT IT DID NOT ASK
TAT THE GA-PUT PUERTO RICO BACK ON THE LIST OF
NON-SELF GOVERNING TERRITORIES. LEONARD AND MISSOFF
MADE CLEAR THAT THEY COULDNOT ENTER INTO A DIS-
CUSSION OF THE TEXT. NO RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO
WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY US AT THIS TIME. HAVING MADE
THAT POINT, WE COMMENTED ON THE IMPROPRIETY AND
OFFENSIVENESS OF THE DEMAND FOR THE RELEASE OF THE
NATIONALIST "5" AND ALSO THAT THE PHRASE "COLONIAL
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PAGE 03 USUN N 02807 02 OF 02 312000Z

SITUATION" IN PUERTO RICO WENT LIGHT YEARS BEYOND
ANY PREVIOUS C-24 LANGUAGE ON THE SUBJECT. ALARCON
SAID THAT IF HE WERE THE USG AND THE RESOLUTION WERE
ADOPTED, HE WOULD SAY THAT THE C-24 HAS NO RIGHT TO
DO SO IF THE GA DOESN'T ACCEPT THAT PUERTO RICO IS A
NON-SELF- GOVERNING TERRITORY.

8. CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONSENSUS, ALARCON
SAID THAT, AS HE HAD TOLD EASUM, CUBA DOESN'T OPPOSE
A CONSENSUS, BUT A CONSENSUS IS A DIFFICULT RESULT
TO ACHIEVE, REQUIRING AN EFFORT TO BRING THE
LANGUAGE CLOSER TO CUBAN VIEWS. HE DID NOT KNOW THEN,
AND STILL DOES NOT KNOW, IF A CONSENSUS IS POSSIBLE.
WHILE AGREEING THAT THEREIS A "FEELING" IN FAVOR
OF CONSENSUS IN THE COMMITTEE, HE SAID IT WILL NOT
BE EASY AND ADDED THAT CONSENSUS FOR OUR (CUBAN) RESOLUTION"
IS NOT EASY TO FIND. HE AGAIN NOTED THAT THE ROLE
OF THE MEDIA MADE ACHIEVEMENT OF CONSENSUS MORE
DIFFICULT, SINCE ANY BACKING OFF BY CUBA WOULD BE
INTERPRETED AS CAPITUALTION TO US PRESSURE.

9. IN RESPOSE TO LEONARD'S QUERY WHETHER A DECISION
NEEDE TO TAKEN ON THURSDAY, ALARCON REPLIED THAT
COMMITTEE MEMBERS WOULD PREFER TO COMPLETE THE ITEM
BY LABOR DAY AND THAT HE HOPED TO BE IN HAVANA NEXT
WEEK. HE SAID ONE SHOULD NOT, NOWEVER, PUT PERSONAL
CONCERNS AHEAD OF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

10. IN CLOSING, LEONARD REITERATEDTHE WIDESPREAD IMPACT THAT ADOPTIONOF THE CUBAN RESOLUTION WOULD HAVE -- NOT A CONSEQUENCE WHICH THE GOC WOULD LIKE. ITS IMPACT BE OUT OF PROPORTION TO WHAT ALERCON HAD CHARACTERIZED AS "MILD" LALGUAGE. ALARCON SAID HE SAW NO POINT AND WOULD FULLY REPORT THE CONVERSATION.

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PAGE 04 USUN N 02807 02 OF 02 312000Z

11. COMMENT: ALARCON'S COMMENT THAT NO COSPONSORS SIGNED ON BECAUSE THEY WANTED ASSURANCES THAT THE RESOLUTION NOT BE WITHDRAWAN WAS A HOPEFUL NOTE. ON THE OTHER HAND, ALARCON'S REPEATED INSISTENCE THAT A CONSENSUS WOULD BE HARD TO ACHIEVE IS IN CONTRAST WITH REPORTS FROM VARIOUS PARTIES (REPORTED SEPTELS) OF INDICATIONS OF CUBAN FLEXIBILITY, BUT IS NOT IN-CONSISTENT WITH ALARCON'S SKILL AS A NEGOTIATOR, DESIROUS OF GIVING AWAY AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. HIS APPARENT EFFORTS TO DRAW US INTO A CONVERSATION ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE CUBAN DRAFT AND THE REPEATED IMPLICATIONS OF A READINESS TO REDRAFT THE DOCUMENT PROBABLY REPRESENT AN EFFORT TO COME UP WITH A RESOLUTION WE WOULDNOT OBJECT SO STRONGLY TO. WE WERE CAREFUL NOT TO ENTER INTO THE EXERCISE AND TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT NO RESOLUTION WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. END COMMENT.

12. VRAALSEN (NORWAY) TALKED TO ALARCON FOLLOWING LEONARD'S CONVERSATION WITH HIM ON AUGUST 30. ALACON TOLD VRAALSEN THAT HE HOPED TO HAVE INSTRUCTIONS BY THE MORNING OF AUGUST 31. HE REPEATED THAT HE SAW SOME DIFFICULTIESIN ARRIVING AT A CONSENSUS. ALARCON WILL BE BRIEFING ACTING C-24 CHAIRMAN ABDULAH THIS MORNING (AUGUST 31) AS C-24 CHAIRMAN SALIM WILL NOT REP NOT RETURN TO NEW YORK UNTIL SEPTEMBER 6.

LEONARD

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

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TAGS: PORG, RQ, US, CU, UNGA, C-24
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22 May 2009
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